



Communications Strategies for Arts Organizations Toolkit

Tuesday, April 8, 2008, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Room D, KU Public Management Bldg.
715 S.W. 10th St., Topeka

Wednesday, April 9, 2008, 1:00 – 3:00 pm
Community Room, Derby Recreation Commission
801 E. Market St., Derby

Thursday, April 10, 2008, 1:00 – 3:00 pm
Meeting Room, Hays Public Library
1205 Main St., Hays

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Communications Overview

Within the four p's of the marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion), communications falls into the category of promotion. Methods of communications include advertising, media relations, publications, direct marketing, news releases and more. Using two or more methods in a communications plan is commonly referred to as *integrated marketing communications*.

Besides the venues for distributing your message, you also need to look at your audience, create a plan for executing your marketing objectives and evaluate your results.

Who is my audience?

If you don't know who your audience is, you'd better find out and fast! People often believe that if they send their message to everyone they will have greater results. But you may miss your mark and spend more money in the process! An arts organization can have several audiences (members, donors, volunteers, artists), with different interests (theatre, dance, visual arts, arts educators) and demographics (age, location). The media is also an audience.

Surveys

Surveys are a common way to gather information about your audience. Surveys help you find out about your audience's interests in the arts, types of programming they would like to see, age, number of children and more. Surveys can be sent out to your existing mailing list, included in a program with an "enter-to-win" incentive or given to a focus group. Response rates for surveys can vary, but getting *any* information from your audience(s) will help in making marketing communications decisions.

Reflection

Another way to know your audience is by reflecting on past event and activities to find out what types of people attended. Was it senior citizens? Children? Families? Were there groups from different organizations there? Schools? By examining who was there you know that these audiences are interested in your events and activities, and you can market to them in the future.

Networking

Networking and communicating with others is also a way to your determine audience. Keep your ears open during conversation for stories and comments for ideas on who to market to and how. You'd be surprised at what you can learn! Also, speak with other arts organizations and similar organizations in your community to find out who is their audience and how they reach them. Learn from their successes and failures. You might even request to borrow their mailing list or partner with the organization(s) in the future.

Create an audience

Kids, kids and more kids. If you want to draw a crowd, make your event or activity kid-friendly. Parents and grandparents will follow and you will have an audience before you know it. Work with local schools and children's programs to introduce your event with a promotional appearance or incorporate kids into part of the show.

Other ideas:

- Are you featuring a music performance but your audience has never heard of them? Distribute CDs to local coffee shops and ask them to play the music to their customers. Include a small sign "now-playing, will be featured at."
- Sell gift certificates to your events. This is a great way to introduce your organization's events to new audiences.

- Make your event special for a holiday. If it's Valentine's Day and you're hosting an event, give out free roses to the first 100 attendees.

Segmented Database

Once you have your audience information compiled, insert it into in a database. Segment the database so the information can also be searched by audience interests. Besides serving as a host for contact information, the database can track additional constituent information such as basic demographics, interests, ticket purchases, donations, media preferences and more.

Hint:

- Databases can range in price, but for an affordable option look into Microsoft Access.

What is the message I want convey to my audience(s)?

How do I reach my audience(s)?

Communication activities for reaching your audience can include direct mail, brochures, media relations, websites and newsletters. A combination of several communications methods is referred to as integrated marketing communications. There is no one answer to selecting the right communications activity for all organizations, as audiences will vary based on geography and demographics.

Advertising

Advertising is bringing an activity or event to the attention of a potential and current audience. Advertising is the controlled delivery of information, through paid space or time. Your message will be delivered exactly as you want in the media outlet that you designate. Your only limitation is your budget. Advertising space or time can be purchased from newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations, billboards, websites, etc., and it is typically done with signs, brochures, commercials, brochures, direct mailings or e-blasts, etc.

Advertising can be expensive and out of reach for many nonprofits. However, if resources are available, look at the *frequency* and *reach* of your message to your audience can provide successful results.

Frequency is the number of times your message is heard, and **reach** is how far your message is distributed. Do you want to keep targeting a local audience with your message or do you want to direct your message to audiences not in your location?

Hints:

- Many of NPR and PBS stations offer discounts for underwriting nonprofit organizations.
- Mainstream media may also offer discounts to nonprofits for advertising.
- Pitch an event sponsorship idea to media representatives in exchange for free advertising.
- More people are reading newspapers online vs. print newspapers.
- If you can identify a target audience by name and address you might consider a direct mail campaign. It can be cost-effective because it allows you to deliver the message only to those you choose. Mailing lists can be purchased from local media.
- If you choose to distribute using targeted eblasts, make sure to not overload your audience with messages with useless information and messages too often. A rule of thumb is to target your audience no more than once a week depending on the message. Also, if a recipient wants to “opt-out” of your mailing list, be sure to comply within 10 business days according to the CAN-SPAM law.

News Media Relations

News media relations is a low-cost, highly credible way to inform the community about who you are, what you do and what you are doing. No matter what method you use to contact the media, always make sure the information you are presenting deserves the attention of reporters and editors, as well as their readers, listeners and viewers.

Reporters and editors take their work very seriously and pride themselves on providing objective accounts. To partner with, instead of against, the media you must understand their commitment as well as the pressures they face. The greatest pressures come from balancing tight deadlines with accurate, complete reporting. To respond to this appropriately:

- Prepare and deliver your messages in plenty of time to make both your desired timeframe and theirs.
- Learn how different media outlets prefer to receive information, such as by letter, phone, fax or e-mail.
- Familiarize yourself with the type of news that each media outlet presents.

Anything you do to save the news media time, while advancing their work to provide complete and accurate information, will strengthen your information, inaccuracies or unnecessary questions you weaken your relationship with them.

Gather media information, just as you would audience information, and store it in a segmented database and keep it current. Besides basic contact information, collect frequency of publication/broadcast, deadlines and key contacts.

Hints:

- Read the newspaper to learn more about the reporters and who covers arts news.
- Talk shows can provide free time on television and radio public affairs programs and cable systems can be used to distribute your message.
- Expand your media list. Besides local newspapers, radio and television media, look to sending your news release to “like-organization” newsletter editors or editors of newsletters with your audience base.
- If your budget permits, you should send (and have extras on hand) color or black and white printed photos. Some publications only want you to e-mail a JPEG image (usually 300 dpi) or send a CD of photos. Always call to see what format they want images in before you send them.

How do I distribute my news to the media?

News can be distributed by news release, news kit, fact sheet, media alert, pitch letters, letter to the editor and event listings. News releases are the most common, but you can follow up your message with one or more other vehicles of communication to the media.

News Release (or Press Release)

A news release is an announcement of an event, performance or other newsworthy item written as a news story. The news release should cover the five W's: who, what, where when and why. On occasion, media outlets, especially online media, will pick up your news release and run it in their publications with little or no modification. More commonly, journalists will use your press release as a springboard for a larger feature story. In either case, try to develop a story as you would like to have it told. Even if your news is not reprinted verbatim, it may provide an acceptable amount of exposure. Send out news releases at least one month before your event. When possible, try to send this information electronically to a reporter or editor.

News Kit (or Press Kit)

A press kit provides journalists with a complete picture of your organization, production or event. It is generally meant for those writers who have already expressed an interest in covering your event – not for the entire press list – and would either be sent in advance or handed in person to a reporter who is writing about or reviewing your event.

Fact Sheet

A fact sheet is a presentation of information in a format emphasizing brevity, key points of interest or concern, and convey the most relevant information in the least amount of space. Fact sheets typically accompany a news release or are included in a news kit.

Media Alert

A media alert is intended for more urgent matters. If there is an approaching deadline, such as an event cancelled abruptly or scheduled to occur in three days, an alert would be the most appropriate communications tool. Media alerts should be issued sparingly and only when something happens that cannot be controlled. They should not be a substitute for lack of planning. When possible, try to send this information electronically to a reporter or editor.

Pitch Letters

A pitch letter is designed to interest reporters and editors in writing their own stories about a particular topic, rather than taking information from a news release. Use a pitch letter to encourage a media outlet to interview someone, a focus on an issue or attend and cover an event. Pitch letters abandon standard journalism style, and can be much more editorial than descriptive.

Event listings

Most newspapers have a section that lists coming events in the community. Use them for special events, lectures, exhibitions, grand openings and more. When possible, try to send this information electronically to a reporter or editor.

Other Communications Tools

Newsletters

Consider a newsletter as your own private newspaper conveying specific information to a specific audience. Newsletters can be mailed, e-mailed or posted on a website. A newsletter contains numerous articles that tend to be educational or informative. Newsletters are published on a regular schedule.

Websites

If you don't have a website, get one! It is rare to find an organization that doesn't use a website to deliver basic information and special announcements. A well designed website should be part of your outreach efforts. Websites can include event information, photos, video, blogs, podcasts and more.

Hints:

- Websites are not as expensive as you might think. Check out your local internet provider, email host (Yahoo!, Google) and website companies (1to1.com, GoDaddy.com). Many offer templates so you can build your own page, as well as maintain it.
- While technology is advancing at a rapid pace, keep in mind whether or not your audience is technology savvy. Do members of your audience even have iPods? Just because the technology is available, doesn't mean you have to use it!
- If you choose to host a blog on your site, make sure it is updated no less than weekly. People won't come back to it if it doesn't offer new information.

Community Presentations

Offer yourself as a speaker to area organizations, such as civic and service clubs, chambers of commerce, schools and social organizations, as a way to introduce individuals and organizations to your event or program. Organizations are always looking for interesting programs. It might also lead to partnership opportunities in the future.

Communication Plan

Now you know which mediums are available to you, what's the next step? Put together a communications plan. A communications plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of project participants in the review, approval and dissemination of information about key project processes, events, documents and milestones. Implementing a well-thought-out communications plan will:

- Help manage expectations regarding the project.
- Ensure methods used for communication will be most effective.
- Assure appropriate levels of communication with audiences.
- Provide relevant, accurate, consistent information at all times.
- Generate and sustain enthusiasm and support for the project.

Evaluation

Whew! Your event is over, but your work isn't done yet. You need to evaluate your communications plan to see how effective it measures against the objectives you set during the planning process. Some questions to ask yourself:

- Was the activity or program adequately planned?
- Did recipients of the message understand it?
- How could the program strategy have been more effective?
- Were all audiences reached?
- Was the desired organizational objective achieved?
- What unforeseen circumstances affected the success of the program or activity?
- Did the program or activity fall within the budget set for it?
- What steps can be taken to improve the success of similar future activities?

Also, look over the other p's in your marketing mix – product, price, place:

- Was your program what your audience wanted to take part of?
- Was the cost of your activity an audience deterrent?
- Was the location of your event a factor?

If your event was a success, you know that you can implement all or many of the same activities that worked next time. If your event didn't produce the results you had anticipated. Don't beat yourself up. Next time you will know what to do and what not to do to reach your audience.

Communication Strategy Tips & Samples



Tips for Developing Effective Communications

- Identify communication tools that will advance your needs. They may include media relations, advertising direct mail, website, grand opening or other special events. Discard tools that don't meet your needs.
- Start thinking from the viewpoint of the audience. What is on their minds?
- What is in it for them?
- Give the audience a sense of involvement in the communication process and what is going on. Get them involved and you gain their interest.
- Communicate with people, not at them. Communication that approaches the audience as a target makes people put up defenses against it.
- Localize. Deliver your message as close as possible to the intended recipient's location.
- Use many channels of communications, not just one or two. The impact is far greater when your message reaches people in different forms.
- Maintain consistency, so what is said on the subject is the same no matter who delivers the message and in what format.
- Don't propagandize, but be sure to make your point. Clearly state your position.
- Maintain credibility. Do not lie or mislead.



News Release Writing Tips

- In general, the best press release is clear, short, to the point and follows Associated Press guidelines.
- Use 8" x 11" paper with a minimum of one-inch margins on each side of the page. Use only one side of the page and double-space your text.
- At the top of the page, include "for immediate release", the date of the release and your contact information – mailing address, telephone, fax, e-mail and website.
- Write a headline that captures the media's attention. Keep it as short and clear as possible.
- Capitalize the first letter of all words in the headline (except for articles and prepositions – a, an, the, of, to, from). Don't use ALL CAPS because it's harder to read, instead, bold the your headlines to get more attention.
- Begin the body of the news release with the most important news and state the basic message of the release and be no loner than a few sentences, and answer (who, what, when, where, why and sometimes how).
- Avoid clichés, uncommon terms and jargon a general reader might not understand, as well as excessive use of adjectives and superlatives.
- Spell out acronyms and shortened titles on first reference. For example, Kansas Arts Commission (KAC).
- Avoid exclamation points (!). If you must use an exclamation point, use only one.
- The final paragraph of the news release should include a boilerplate – a short description your organization, its mission and history.
- If you have more than one page, write "MORE" between two dashes (- MORE -) and center it at the bottom of the page to let journalist know that a page follows.
- When you are finished writing your news release, type three number symbols and center it on line at the end of the last paragraph to indicate the end of the press release (# # #).
- Finally, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD!


<p>For more information contact: Robyn Horton Public Information Officer 785/368-6546 robyn@arts.ks.gov</p> <p>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 7, 2008</p>	 <p>ARTS COMMISSION</p> <p>700 SW Jackson Street, Ste. 1004 Topeka, Kansas 66603-3774 http://arts.ks.gov</p>
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KAC TO HOLD 188TH COMMISSION MEETING IN TOPEKA

Topeka, KS – The Kansas Arts Commission will hold its 188th commission meeting in Topeka at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 11, in the Simmerwell Room at the Kansas State Historical Society, 6425 SW 6th Avenue, in Topeka. The meeting is open to the public. For more information, community members may call 785/296-3335.

The Kansas Arts Commission is the state agency dedicated to promoting and supporting the arts in Kansas. Its mission is to provide opportunities for the people of Kansas to experience, celebrate and value the arts throughout their lives. For more information on the Kansas Arts Commission, please visit the KAC website at <http://arts.ks.gov>.

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<p>For more information contact: Robyn Horton Public Information Officer 785/368-6546 robyn@arts.ks.gov</p> <p>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE September 12, 2007</p>	 <p>ARTS COMMISSION</p> <p>700 SW Jackson Street, Ste. 1004 Topeka, Kansas 66603-3774 http://arts.ks.gov</p>
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ART WORKSHOPS TO FOSTER KANSAS ARTISTS' BUSINESS SKILLS

Topeka, KS – Creativity and skill aren't the only talents artists need to be a profitable success in the arts community. Artists also need business sense when marketing their work to Kansas audiences.

Unlike the high profile art scenes of New York and Los Angeles, the art market in Kansas is different, says Margaret Weisbrod Morris, Kansas Arts Commission program manager of community and artist partnerships.

"Kansas artists need to create and build their audiences on a local level," said Morris. "You have to be creative and think like an entrepreneur to be profitable in the arts."

Sue Suhler, a visual artist from Lawrence, Kan., and member of the Lawrence Art Guild, signed up for the outreach seminars to learn more about organizational planning and how it can benefit when preparing grant applications. She also agrees that artists need to look at the business side of art, especially when it comes to marketing your work.

"Promote or die. What if no one knows where to view our art?" said Suhler. "We do not really do art for ourselves, but to share ourselves with our various worlds, our stakeholders."

- more -

To help Kansas artists see a greater return on their work, the Kansas Arts Commission, in conjunction with the Kansas Small Business Development Center, is offering free business information seminars to Kansas artists and arts businesses. The classes are designed to be accessible and provide practical business information from experts on the Kansas economy. Key topics will include: writing business plans, creating budgets, marketing, financing your business, accounting and taxes, and obtaining permits and licenses. The free seminars will be offered at:

- 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, September 27
Lied Center of Kansas Conference Room
1600 Stewart Drive, Lawrence
- 6 to 8 p.m., Tuesday, October 2
Eugene M. Hughes Metropolitan Complex
5015 E. 29th Street N, Wichita
- 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., Thursday, October 18
Garden City Community College
Student and Community Services Center
801 Campus Drive, Garden City

Registration is required. To register for a seminar, please send your name, address and phone number to: margaret@arts.ks.gov or call Margaret Weisbrod Morris at 785/365-6545.

The Kansas Arts Commission is the state agency dedicated to promoting and supporting the arts in Kansas. Its mission is to provide opportunities for the people of Kansas to experience, celebrate and value the arts throughout their lives. For more information on the Kansas Arts Commission, please visit the KAC website at <http://arts.ks.gov>.

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<p>For more information contact: Robyn Horton Public Information Officer 785/368-6546 robyn@arts.ks.gov</p> <p>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE September 25, 2007</p>	 <p>ARTS COMMISSION</p> <p>700 SW Jackson Street, Ste. 1004 Topeka, Kansas 66603-3774 http://arts.ks.gov</p>
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MEDIA ALERT

KAC BUSINESS OF ARTS WORKSHOP CANCELED

Topeka, KS – The Kansas Arts Commission’s Business of Arts Workshop scheduled for Thursday, September 25, at the Lied Center in Lawrence, has been canceled. The workshop will be rescheduled in the spring.

For more information, contact Margaret Weisbrod Morris at 785/365-6545 or margaret@arts.ks.gov.

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Fact Sheet

- The Kansas Art Commission provides opportunities for the 2.7 million residents of Kansas to experience, celebrate and value the arts.
- The Kansas Arts Commission serves artists, nonprofit organizations, schools and government agencies through grants to support the arts in communities.
- The Kansas Arts Commission provides seminars, workshops and one-on-one consulting in business development, grant writing, strategic planning, marketing and other areas of nonprofit arts management to Kansas artists and arts organizations.
- The Kansas Arts Commission, a state agency, was established in 1966 by the Kansas Legislature to stimulate the growth, development and appreciation of the arts in Kansas.
- Funded by the Kansas State Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, the Kansas Arts Commission is overseen by a 12-member board appointed by the Governor of Kansas. The Commission holds quarterly meetings, which are open to the public.
- Eight staff members are responsible for the operations of the Kansas Arts Commission; they guide members of the public in applying for grants, developing sound business practices for the arts and building communities through the arts.



Resources for News Distribution

- **Kansas Press Association** (<http://www.kspress.com>)
 - Website listing state newspapers.
- **Kansas Association of Broadcasters** (<http://www.kab.net>)
 - Website listing state TV and radio stations.
- **KANSAS!** (<http://www.kansmag.com>)
 - Print magazine with features and photo galleries showcasing a variety of topics — from the people and communities to the food and the striking scenery and unique landscapes that make Kansas a special place to live and visit.
- **Eye on Kansas** (<http://www.eyeonkansas.org>)
 - Online magazine that explores what makes Kansas home — creativity, inspiration, imagination.
- **Kansas Arts Commission** (<http://arts.ks.gov>)
 - Website provides arts events calendar listing.
- **Kansas Department of Commerce, Travel and Tourism Division** (<http://www.travelks.com>)
 - Website provides events calendar listing.
- Also send news items about your event or activity to your local and area Chamber of Commerce, Conventions and Visitors Bureau and to other organizations in your area with newsletters.



Tips for Creating a Communications Plan

- Identify the project audience(s).
- Assess information needs – determine what audiences need to know, want to know, and expect.
- Identify communications methods you want to use – direct mail, e-blasts, media, etc.
- Identify key message(s) that needs to be distributed.
- Determine dates and define how communications will be provided.
- If approval is needed for an activity, be sure to document in your plan.



Communication Plan

Event: Business of Arts Workshops			
Date(s): September 27, October 2, October 18			
Message: Announce Business of Arts Workshops offered by KAC.			
Objective: Have an audience of 25 or more at event.			
Audience	Activity/Description	Cost	Date
Media: all state newspapers, radio and television (list of 42)	News release	\$0	One month prior to first event.
Artists / Arts Organizations (list of 500)	Eblast: Announcement in weekly eblast	\$0	Each week, one month prior to first event.
Artists / Arts Organizations (list of 500)	Newsletter: Announcement in fall newsletter	\$0	Two weeks prior to first event.
Artists / Arts Organizations, general public	Website: Announcement on homepage	\$0	One month prior to first event.
Artists / Arts Organizations (list of 500)	Postcard: Full-color card distributed to artists and arts organizations on mailing list	\$1,000	One month prior to event.